

# STATE OF WISCONSIN

SENATE CHAIR  
**Howard Marklein**

316 East, State Capitol  
P.O. Box 7882  
Madison, WI 53707-7882  
Phone: (608) 266-0703



ASSEMBLY CHAIR  
**Mark Born**

308 East, State Capitol  
P.O. Box 8952  
Madison, WI 53708-8953  
Phone: (608) 266-2540

## JOINT COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

### MEMORANDUM

To: Members  
Joint Committee on Finance

From: Senator Howard Marklein  
Representative Mark Born

Date: January 18, 2022

Re: DHS Report to JFC

Attached is the HOPELINE annual report to JFC from the Department of Health Services, pursuant to JFC October 2, 2019, s. 13.10 action.

This report is being provided for your information only. No action by the Committee is required. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Attachments

HM:MB:jm



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Health Services

Tony Evers, Governor  
Karen E. Timberlake, Secretary

January 10, 2021

JAN 18 2022

St. Finance

The Honorable Howard L Marklein  
Joint Committee on Finance, Senate Co-Chair  
Room 316 East State Capitol  
PO Box 7882  
Madison, WI 53707

The Honorable Mark Born  
Joint Committee on Finance, Assembly Co-Chair  
Room 308 East State Capitol  
PO Box 8952  
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Senator Marklein and Representative Born:

I am pleased to submit to the Legislature the HOPELINE Annual Report, as directed by the Joint Committee on Finance at its October 2, 2019, meeting under § 13.10. The attached report address suicide prevention activities in Wisconsin, including information on suicide prevention services provided by HOPELINE between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021.

Sincerely,

Karen E. Timberlake  
Secretary-designee

Enclosure



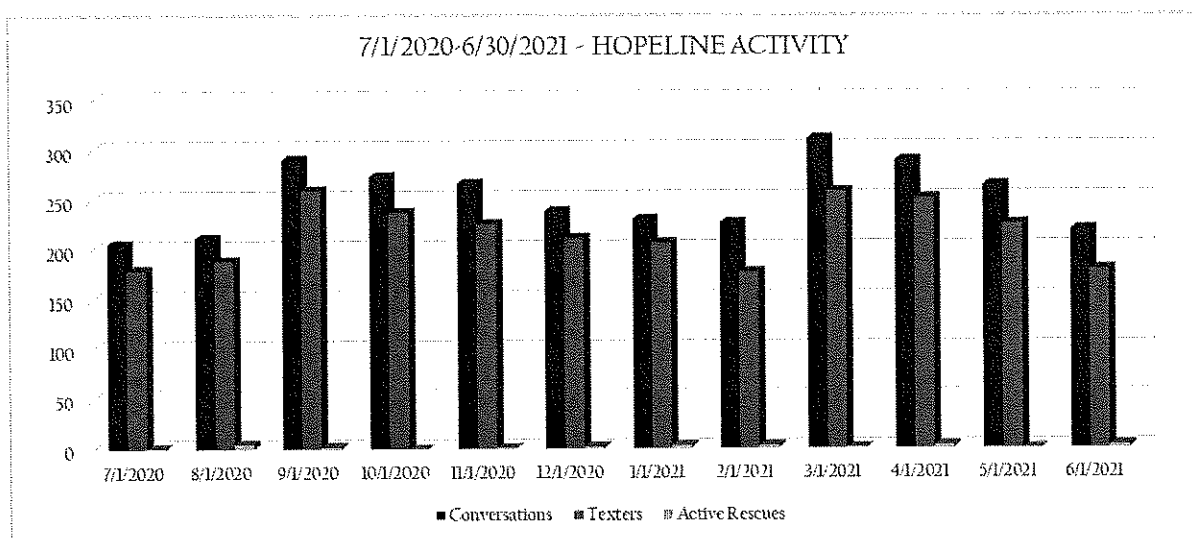
## **HOPELINE Annual Report to the Legislature — July 1, 2020 Through June 30, 2021**

By direction of the State Legislature, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services provides grant funds in the amount of \$110,000 General Purpose Revenue (GPR) per state fiscal year to the Center for Suicide Awareness (CSA), a non-profit organization based in Kaukauna, Wisconsin. The funds are used to obtain and share data related to the use of HOPELINE, a text message-based emotional support service, as well as to maintain “HOPELINE” as Wisconsin’s text message keyword for the national Crisis Text Line (CTL).

CTL is a free, 24/7 text message-based support service for people in emotional crisis that is reached by texting CTL’s number, 741741. People who text “HOPELINE” to 741741 are assumed to be in Wisconsin, with data about such texts and texters able to be collected. Therefore HOPELINE data can be used by stakeholders in the state to help inform efforts related to mental health services and supports, crisis intervention, and suicide prevention. This report, which is being provided in accordance with requirements laid out by the Joint Finance Committee, contains data related to the use of HOPELINE, as well as information on CSA’s expenditures.

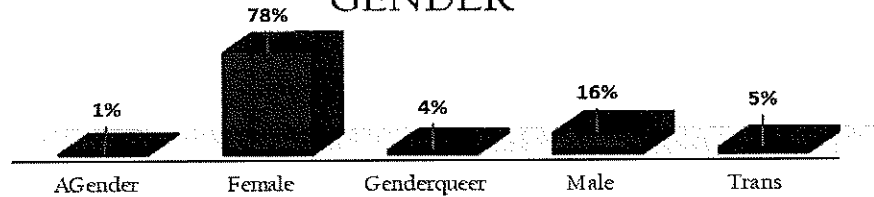
In the period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, the number of individuals who texted HOPELINE was 2,595. Those individuals collectively had 3,022 text conversations with crisis counselors. A “conversation” is an instance of text exchanges between a texter and a crisis counselor, akin to a call between a caller and crisis counselor in a voice-based phone service. Just as an individual caller might make multiple calls to a voice-based service, an individual texter may reach out to HOPELINE multiple times and have multiple conversations with the service. Also during this period, HOPELINE requested emergency services be dispatched to the texter’s physical location on 24 occasions, due to the crisis counselor being unable to de-escalate the crisis. Those figures compare to 2,420 individuals, 3,132 conversations, and 44 emergency dispatches respectively over the same period the previous year.

The chart below shows a breakdown of the 2020-2021 volume figures by month.

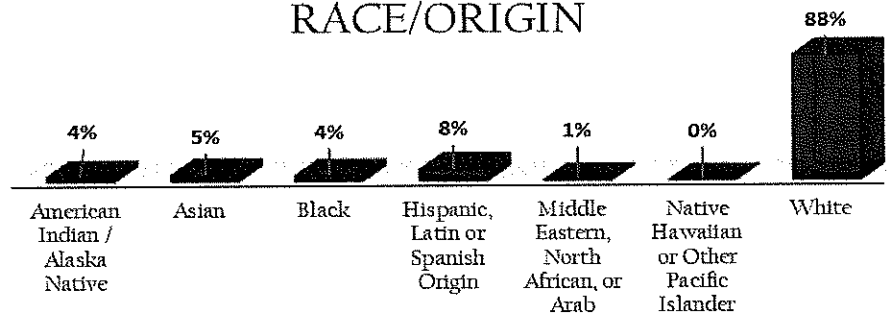


In addition to text and conversation volume, HOPELINE has access to demographic data reported by texters themselves for the following categories: gender; race/origin; age; sexual orientation; disability status; and military status. The following charts show data for these categories for the period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Percentage totals may exceed 100% due to rounding or to texters identifying with more than one item in a category.

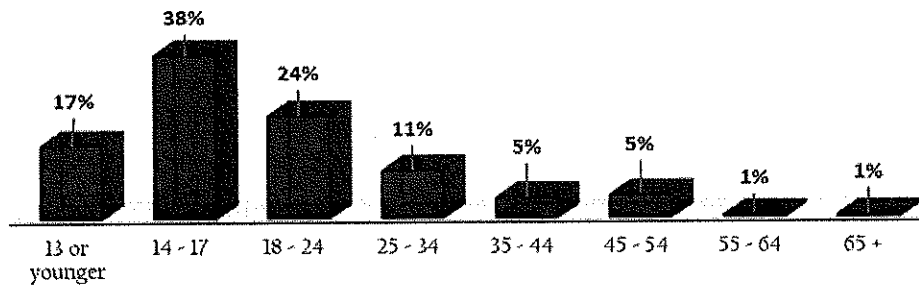
### 7/1/2020-6/30/2021 - HOPELINE ACTIVITY - GENDER



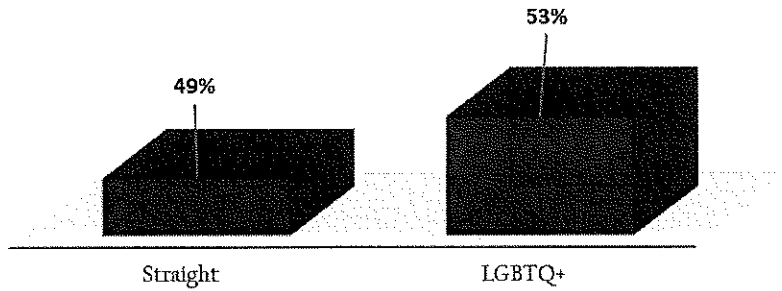
### 7/1/2020-6/30/2021 - HOPELINE ACTIVITY - RACE/ORIGIN



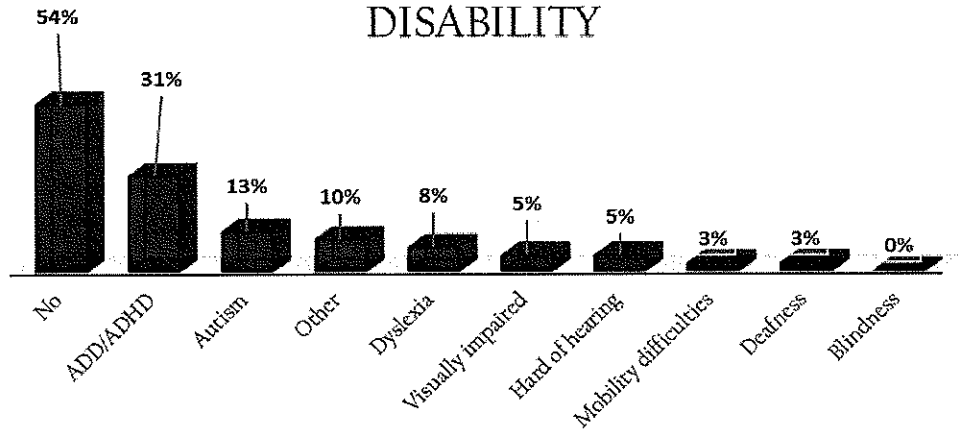
### 7/1/2020-6/30/2021 - HOPELINE ACTIVITY - AGE



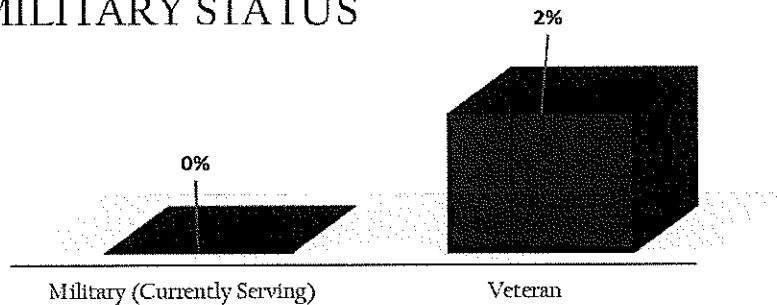
## 7/1/2020-6/30/2021 - HOPELINE ACTIVITY - SEXUAL ORIENTATION



## 7/1/2020-6/30/2021 - HOPELINE ACTIVITY - DISABILITY



## 7/1/2020-6/30/2021 - HOPELINE ACTIVITY - MILITARY STATUS



Another demographic category is texter location, for which HOPELINE has data at the county level. The following table shows the distribution of conversations per county over the period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

#### Conversation Volume by County

County	Number of Conversations
Adams	2
Ashland	2
Barron	13
Bayfield	1
Brown	176
Calumet	15
Chippewa	17
Clark	11
Columbia	16
Dane	92
Dodge	22
Door	9
Douglas	5
Dunn	16
Eau Claire	57
Fond du Lac	21
Forest	5
Grant	26
Green	4
Green Lake	3
Iowa	6
Jackson	15
Jefferson	8
Kenosha	28
La Crosse	63
Lafayette	1
Langlade	8
Lincoln	16
Manitowoc	31
Marathon	31

County	Number of Conversations
Marinette	4
Milwaukee	253
Monroe	20
Oconto	2
Oneida	14
Outagamie	258
Pepin	1
Polk	9
Portage	27
Price	5
Racine	81
Richland	5
Rock	47
Rusk	4
Sauk	11
Sawyer	1
Shawano	2
Sheboygan	40
Taylor	7
Trempealeau	5
Vernon	2
Vilas	2
Walworth	29
Washburn	3
Washington	73
Waukesha	121
Waupaca	35
Waushara	1
Winnebago	59
Wood	12

The following two tables show the distribution of HOPELINE conversation volume by day of the week and time of day for the period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

Day of Week	Percentage of Volume
Sunday	13%
Monday	16%
Tuesday	15%
Wednesday	15%
Thursday	14%
Friday	15%
Saturday	13%

Time of Day	Percentage of Volume
12 a.m.–2 a.m.	12%
2 a.m.–4 a.m.	6%
4 a.m.–6 a.m.	3%
6 a.m.–8 a.m.	2%
8 a.m.–10 a.m.	3%
10 a.m.–12 p.m.	7%
12 p.m.–2 p.m.	9%
2 p.m.–4 p.m.	8%
4 p.m.–6 p.m.	9%
6 p.m.–8 p.m.	10%
8 p.m.–10 p.m.	14%
10 p.m.–12 a.m.	17%

The content of text conversations is another data point collected for HOPELINE. This table shows the top issues that texters talked about during the period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

Issue	Percentage of Conversations Containing the Issue
Depression/Sadness	34%
Anxiety/Stress	32%
Relationship	30%
School	26%
Suicide	25%
Isolation/Loneliness	19%
Self-Harm	15%
Finances	5%

This section of the report contains information on CSA's expenditures using the grant funds for the period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

Grant funds in the amount of \$110,000 were used by CSA for the following activities:

- Maintain the "HOPELINE" keyword contract with CTL (\$4,000)
- Support general HOPELINE operations, including office space, office supplies, bookkeeping services, and liability insurance required by CTL (\$6,085)
- Maintain technology that enables access to the CTL premium dashboard data system, which contains the HOPELINE data (\$6,700)
- Employ two 0.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff (\$93,215 salary and fringe) to perform the following duties for HOPELINE:
  - Fulfill requests for data reports
  - Field questions regarding the data
  - Examine the data to gauge activity and possible trends
  - Collect information on how data is being utilized and for what purposes
  - Work within Wisconsin to educate stakeholders on the importance of using the "HOPELINE" keyword to ensure that data for the state is complete as possible
  - Work with CTL national, as well as with other state CTL keyword holders, to help ensure the accuracy and integrity of HOPELINE data
  - Engage with a web developer and server host site to prepare for launch of the HOPELINE data portal on the CSA website

CSA's launch of a public-facing data portal has been delayed in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic. CSA staff and their web developer need to work directly with staff at CTL who have expertise in data and technology in order to facilitate the technical aspects of placing the data portal on the CSA website. However, due to limited capacity during the pandemic, CTL has had difficulty in dedicating sufficient staff time to CSA to accomplish this goal. Another issue has been CSA's concern related to inconsistent use of the "HOPELINE" keyword in the state, which can lead to gaps in the data. CSA is addressing this with education efforts around consistent keyword use. It is expected that both of these barriers will be overcome during the current grant cycle of July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.